

# COLLECTING COAT SCORES

Coat scores assess the coat of young animals examining hair length, fibre diameter and handle, and are measured as a visual score.

Coat scores do not need to be collected by an accredited scorer.

## Recording coat score data

Coat scores are collected on a 1-7 scale based on the visual appearance of the animal. Half scores can be used to identify animals who exhibit a coat score which is intermediate to the scores listed.

All animals should be scored by the same scorer on the same day. If the scorers are changed, appropriate management groups will need to be assigned to capture variation in scorers.

## When should coat scores be collected

Coat scores should be recorded when animals are between 300 and 750 days of age.

Due to the impact of seasonal conditions on the coat of an animal, it is important that animals are scored during late spring/early summer when some animals have shed their winter coat, while others have not.

For spring calving herds, animals would normally be scored as yearlings, often in association with their 400 day weight measurement.

For autumn calving herds, animals would normally be scored at ~18-20 months of age,

often in association with their 600 day weight measurement.

Measurements can also be repeated during autumn if members wish to collect a score that is independent of coat shedding, before animals have started growing their winter coat.



- ◇ It is important that there is some variation in the scores that are collected. Scoring all the animals in a group with the same coat score does not identify any differences in coat type between animals, and consequently does not provide any useful information.
- ◇ Management group information should be recorded for any animals or group of animals that have been treated differently or exposed to significant non-genetic influences prior to scoring that may affect their coat score.
- ◇ It is important to try and score as many animals within each contemporary group as possible. Collection of coat scores for only a selection of animals (e.g. only collecting scores for sale bulls rather than the entire bull drop) may result in data biases.
- ◇ Coat scores should be recorded for all animals in a mob on the same day. Coat scores for animals that have been collected on different days will not be directly compared.

Score	Coat Type	Description	
1	Extremely short	Hairs extremely short and closely applied to the skin. Found in some <i>Bos indicus</i> , tropically adapted <i>Bos taurus</i> and in some of their crossbreds.	
2	Very short	Coat sleek, hairs short and coarse, lying flat, just able to be lifted by the thumb.	
3	Fairly short	General appearance smooth-coated. Hairs easily lifted, usually fairly coarse.	
4	Fairly long	Coat not completely smooth, somewhat rough, patches of hairs being curved outwards, or whole coat showing sufficient length to be ruffled.	
5	Long	Hairs distinctly long and lying loosely; predominately coarse.	
6	Hairy	Hairs erect, giving fur-like appearance. Fingers are partly buried in the coat. Fine hairs of under-coat give soft handle.	
7	Very Hairy	The more extreme expression of 6, with greater length and "body", and heavy cover extending to neck and rump.	